

**STATE WIDE CONFERENCE OF RENTAL HOUSING CO-OPERATIVES.**  
**OCTOBER 29 - NOVEMBER 1 1993.**

A number of motions were moved at the conference, they are in point-form because they were taken directly off the butcher paper used in the various sessions (both workshops and plenary sessions). As we all know because they are motions they must remain verbatim, therefore a brief explanation will be presented before each motion to flesh out the ideas incorporated in each motion. The added comments appear in brackets ( ---)

(The first motion refers to a statewide organisation to be formed to hold the titles to all the co-op properties. This was felt to make sense to maximise the benefits from holding such an enormous assets. The properties could be used to raise mortgages, which in turn could be used to upgrade or build new houses. Also this organisation could receive funds from CHP, trust funds, and from co-op rents. This organisation would need to be the one that established new groups because they would purchase the properties. Services to co-ops could be provided, which could include insurance, bulk purchasing of, paint, stoves, other items for the properties. They would register the co-ops. This organisation would need to develop close links with the business sector, therefore it is imperative that a set of guidelines or a charter direct the operation to ensure they are not too influenced by economic rationalism. The organisation would be under the control of co-ops, who will maintain the controlling interest, but may have other people on the board. ie. DPD, Workers. There would be guidelines to limit the total amount of mortgages that could be raised to ensure the security of the properties. This group would also promote and develop the RHC program in a financial manner but also in a social manner. By this we mean that it is not simply enough to increase the size or number of co-ops but also the quality of service provided by the co-op to provide the maximum benefit for the tenant members. Research would be needed to decide where to develop new co-ops and how co-ops are functioning. This organisation should pay half the cost for research. The research function could be done by consultants, so that it could remain unbiased. An appeals process should be developed to give co-ops the right of appeal, a decision made by this organisation, that is both fair and equitable. It is also suggested this group may develop new styles of housing more suitable to the needs of the members, ie, single parent, shared, youth, aged, adult female, households. A sanctions process could be used by this group when co-ops contravene the program guidelines.) . .

MOTION - that an organisation be established to:

- a) hold title,
- b) manage property asset's and finances,
- c) establish other co-operatives,
- d) purchase/develop housing,
- e) provide services,
- f) register co-ops,

on behalf of the RHC program in Victoria.

In doing so the organisation will be required to:

- a) honour the charter,
- b) maintain RHC control,
- c) honour the guidelines concerning (i) accountability,  
(ii) core rules/security of tenure,
- d) promote and develop the RHC program, financially and socially,
- e) contribute to research functions ( as set out),
- f) honour established appeals process.

The organisation should be established under a ' Co-operative Housing Act' of Victoria and empowered to:

- a) receive government /trust funds,
- b) borrow within strict guidelines,
- c) build,
- d) allocate resources within agreed standards,
- e) develop housing options,
- f) review and monitor co-op management within agreed standards,
- g) exercise sanctions when agreed practices are contravened,
- h) indemnify members and co-ops.

Moved Greg

Seconded Maureen

Agreed

## CHARTER

(A charter to guide the operation of the title holder organisation, research and the Joint Co-ops should be drawn up featuring the following points:-)

Motion -that a charter be developed to.....

- Maintain the individuality of co-ops.
- Retain maximum self management of co-ops.
- Within an agreed code of ethics and within a code of co-operativeness which are enforceable.
- Retain security of tenure across a range of changing social and economic circumstances within the agreed guidelines.
- Protect interests and rights of individual members.

Moved Sue      Seconded Fiona

Agreed

(In order for the process to begin the first step should be to discover the current circumstances in co-ops . What is the condition of the housing stock ?, what are the management practises of co-ops ?, would they like to join with the other co-op or go back to the DPD stock ?. All of these and many more questions need to be answered before we take on the titles.)

Motion that in the interests of good government and of the current and future management of community managed housing such an organisation should not begin to operate without:

- a) The benefit of sound independent social and economic research data on the co-operative housing sector and
- b) The strong and unified support of the co-op sector and
- c) The adoption of a charter which establishes the principles upon which the co-op housing sector is based and which is adopted as a primary guide in decision making at all levels.

To achieve a) above it is resolved that a research/review/audit program be established.

(B. it is essential that as many co-op and individual tenants who want to join the new program be allowed the opportunity, for we all have the right to get the increased resources that will flow from the more efficient manner of operation. It may also be that people will be afraid of such a radical change , therefore it is vital we do what we can to explain the new program. Joint co-ops could be the means to achieve this. Both the titles organisation and Joint co-ops would be of equal strength, not one subservient to the other. Joint co-ops would need to be funded by the co-ops so that the government could not cut funding and it could operate without fear or favour.)

To achieve b) above it is resolved that a process begin which establishes a statewide association of Rental Housing Co-operatives with the functions of:

Advocacy and representation - unified RHC co-op umbrella.

Public voice/Lobby group.

Influence / participation on policy formulation

Without Fear of Favour

Assured funding

Able to promote the co-op program

Education and Training

Able to promote individual / personal / community development

Able to develop the RHC / individual / community

Financial

Business

About the coop etc.

Access other community services and develop functional resource network/ curricula

Maximise financial independence

Committed to co-op ideas

Responsible to co-ops.

Moved Jennifer

Seconded Mary

Agreed

( This motion relates to all the sets of standards and guidelines that need to be drawn up for the proposal. They are listed in order of priority)

Motion that- the extensive process required to bring these proposals into effect involving

#### INDICATIVE PRIORITY

Draft Bill for housing co-op act.

- 1 Co-op management standards
- 2 Charter-Principles-Ethics-Co-operativeness
- 3 Standards for -Maintenance  
-Upgrade
- 4 Broad funding proposals
- 5 Co-op housing program guidelines
- 6 Broad program growth projection
- 7 Standards for purchase
- 8 Enforcement mechanisms  
Appeal mechanism
- 9 Membership procedures powers - central body - registration. Powers of co-op.

? \*

#### ASSUMPTION

Central body/Peak agency/ Research and Education and Training are established concurrently.

- be resourced by CHP / DPD as essential prerequisites to the major change program proposed.

Moved Graham Seconded Anne

Agreed

( The last motion was about the job of the Joint Co-ops/ DPD task group who has been given the job of writing the conference report and disseminating it)

Motion that the Joint Co-op's delegation members be responsible to document and analyse the outcomes of the Statewide Conference Oct29-Nov1 93 . Also to present the information to the co-op sector.

Moved Ray Seconded Jean

Agreed

## CHARTER, ETHICS, PRINCIPLES - WORKING PARTY.

CHARTER:            The dictionary defines a charter as (of course this depends on which dictionary is used, this is from mine:) (a) a government franchise given to an organisation/corporation, (b) a set of basic rules or principles that govern an organisation.

At the Joint Co-ops meeting of February 12th, a working party suggested that the following should be included in a charter for the Co-operative Programme.

- \* To provide quality, affordable housing to all members.
- \* To provide for members to exercise control over their housing.
- \* To manage, according to co-operative principles, all properties occupied by co-operative members, under the terms of an appropriate agreement (yet to be established).
- \* To develop and expand the R.H.C. Programme.
- \* To provide extra facilities/services in response to member demand.
- \* To educate it's members, employees and the public on the principles, benefits and techniques of co-operatives and co-operation in general.
- \* To actively co-operate in every practical way with other co-operatives and relevant agencies/individuals.
- \* To offer to its members the protection of the Residential Tenancies Act.
- \* To fulfil all legal obligations as required by relevant Acts or by Management.
- \* To be accountable - ?? To Whom, ??? How.

There was further discussion on issues of a sensitive nature, that will need to be addressed. Time simply did not allow further discussion. We will need to discuss with all co-ops the following:

- \* ??? Sanctions.
- \* Disciplinary Action/s ???
- \* Appeals process - How will this happen and can it work ??
- \* Dysfunctional Co-ops. What will we do ???

It is indeed very difficult to be enthusiastic about something that has a direct impact on, what, about 800 members. For a comprehensive charter to be developed we really need to know what each individual wants/thinks. What do YOU want from the programme.